

Introduction

Studying Advice: Historiography, Methodology, Commentary, Bibliography

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The articles in this special issue address the ways in which domesticity has been constructed in forms of discourse intended to advise. The sources consulted relate to the design of the home and to the consumption of design in the home and might usefully be termed 'domestic design advice'. They include etiquette, homemaking and home decoration advice literature as it appeared in Britain, France and the United States. The articles range across half a century of advice from 1860 to 1913.¹ Design historians have usually employed advice as complementary or additional source material. The originality of the following studies resides in their focal concern with advice for the purposes of understanding the history of design. Such originality is borne out by the need in this introduction to range beyond the concerns of design history into related fields such as historical sociology, American studies and cultural history in seeking models of the use of advice representative of methodological concerns and recurring themes. This introduction considers general methodological problems attendant upon the use of advice literature for historical understanding as well as considering the use of advice literature in design history and introducing the nature of the advice writers and subjects discussed in the following articles. The use of advice in the writing of design history involves the negotiation of several issues: the positioning of advice at an appropriate point within or between the categories of production or consumption; the extent to which prescriptive material may be taken as indicative of practice; the status of advice as a genre between fact and fiction; the similarly contested status of historical discourse and the often nebulous border between advice and advertising, and the extent to which

published advice has been endowed with professional or amateur status.

Everyday domesticity and academia

Trevor Keeble has noted in this journal that while 'considerable attention has been paid to the subject of houses, homes and domestic spaces', domestic space has proved 'a somewhat elusive subject for design history'.² The following articles on domestic design advice are part of a wider context in which the importance of the domestic and the everyday have been recognized anew. As Ben Highmore asserts, 'work on the everyday is . . . only just beginning' and even where it exists, 'much everyday life theory is purposefully addressed to responding to the way in which conventional discourse has erased and ignored the everyday'.³ I would add 'and especially domesticity' to the end of that sentence. While Highmore admits that in the attempts by Simmel and Benjamin to understand modernity "'the everyday" begins to emerge as a critical concept and as an *imaginative fiction* for approaching social life', he contends that 'It is not until we reach the work of Lefebvre and de Certeau that something like "the everyday" as a specific problem emerges'. Writing in 1945 on the importance of the art of living for the end of alienation, Henri Lefebvre poses the rhetorical question, 'Who would have thought it possible a century ago that the first hesitant words of infants or the blushes of adolescents—or the shape of houses—could become the objects of serious scientific study?' Anticipating E. H. Carr, Lefebvre explains that 'the naive historian is taken in' by 'the great men of this world', whereas

'more profound historical study' denounces 'those appearances which use reality in a way that enables [them] cleverly to nurture their prestige'.⁴ Norbert Elias, the historical sociologist pre-eminent in the study of etiquette, showed in his 1969 study of the French royal court that state history and domestic history have been one and the same. Elias's work depends on the assumption that, by understanding the spaces in which people of the past lived, we may understand their social relations.⁵ Highmore laments the fact that the study of everyday life has been considered worthwhile only for the insights it offers into larger historical narratives.⁶ Heidi de Mare, too, notes that "'domesticity" is interpreted by most authors as the expression of something else'.⁷

Domesticity and femininity have been synonymous.⁸ Current academic interest in domesticity is built on the achievements of feminist scholarship such as Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* of 1970 and Sheila Rowbotham's *Hidden from History* of 1973.⁹ Feminist academics pointed to stories omitted from the historical record just as they drew attention to the problems resident in existing accounts, through techniques such as reading 'against the grain'.¹⁰ This project is continued in ongoing work such as Catriona Clear's study of domesticity in Ireland, *Women of the House*.¹¹ Work emphasizing the experience of women has been followed by complementary studies of masculinity. For example, Joanne Hollows has analysed Thomas Mario's presentation of food practices as masculine, in his cookery column in *Playboy*, as a rejection of the association of food and femininity dominant in mid-twentieth century North America.¹²

Other extended challenges to the remit of academic study under the banners Social History, Cultural History and Cultural Studies have opened up understanding of the importance of domesticity as a valuable area of enquiry. Following five decades of seminal, but somewhat isolated, key texts addressing domesticity, current evidence of its importance is ubiquitous. In his 1996 introduction to the anthology *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, Christopher Reed notes that 'Today the domestic is returning to a position of cultural prominence, impelling us to look back over the mainstream of modernism in an effort to trace its domestic subcurrents'.¹³ Reed viewed his collection as 'the preliminary stages' of this reappraisal. In her introduction to *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic*

Space, Irene Cieraad points out that there is a wealth of histories of domestic architecture from art, architectural and social historians and studies of contemporary domestic architecture by sociologists of housing and human geographers. She points out, however, that 'Qualitative research on contemporary Western domestic space is scarce and interpretations of domestic practices are even more exceptional'.¹⁴ Cieraad's collection forms part of the literature that seeks to redress such a lacuna, including topics ranging from Dutch eighteenth-century domesticity to John Dolan's study of 1980s' right-to-buy policies in Britain. In Britain, the allocation of major central government research funding for the Arts and Humanities Research Board Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior further exemplifies recent interest in domesticity.¹⁵ While domesticity and the everyday have been neglected by academic studies, they are now core areas of interest for scholars working in a number of fields, not least within design history.

Advice: production, consumption, mediation

Design history has become progressively attentive to matters everyday and domestic. Whereas three decades ago, it was usual to emulate the model being abandoned in art history of production-oriented accounts of the creative process, this gave way to the recognition that production and consumption are mutually reliant and an approach that recognized these as complementary ensued.¹⁶ An early study of domesticity that influenced design historians (although derived from the history of technology) was Ruth Schwartz Cowan's *More Work for Mother* (1983), which included advice books and magazines among its varied sources to demonstrate that the home did not shift from a site of production to one of consumption but rather has remained a site of *both* production and consumption.¹⁷ Elsewhere Monika Bernold and Andrea Ellmeier have noted that critiques of mass consumption by the Frankfurt School relied on an implicitly female consumer, as Theodore Adorno later admitted.¹⁸ Design history has subsequently flourished where production and consumption and their interface have been explicitly gendered.¹⁹

In 1985, Jeffrey Meikle's survey, 'American Design

History: A Bibliography of Sources and Interpretations', called attention to the fact that 'scores of published primary and secondary sources are available for future scholars', including treatments of consumption and 'manuals of interior design and home furnishing'.²⁰ In 1989, John A. Walker's classic methodological handbook, *Design History and the History of Design*, and Judy Attfield's essay within it, also called for enhanced attention to be paid to consumption. While Walker pointed to the utility of retail, marketing, advertising and magazine sources for piecing together histories of design, however, he referred to design education only in the case of the study of institutions and made no mention of the value of advice and homemaking guides as sources of information for design historians. Notwithstanding Walker's omission, a small number of works within the field of design history that have had recourse to advice literature might usefully be mentioned here, including Christine Morley's work on 'Homemakers and Design Advice in the Post-War Period' and Angela Partington's study of the construction of 'The Designer Housewife in the 1950s'.²¹ Jonathan Woodham's 1985 essay on design propaganda and awareness mentioned the *Good Housekeeping* Seal of Approval and *Which?* among other advice-giving bodies such as the British Standards Institution and the Consumer Advisory Council, the Council of Industrial Design and the Museum of Modern Art.²² Judy Attfield's recent study of the mid-twentieth-century coffee table also used material from the *Good Housekeeping* stable, considering *Setting Up Home* of 1963 within a blend of sources to inform understanding of the relationship between popular taste and modern design.²³ These sources are remarkably consistent in their focus on post-war Britain. Some other works using advice for understanding a broader sweep of the twentieth century include Martine Segalen's *Journal of Design History* article on the Salon des Arts Ménagers and Deborah S. Ryan's work on the 'Ideal Home' exhibition.²⁴

With recognition of the cultural and historical significance of everyday life and domesticity sketched above comes consideration of the discourses through which ideas and ideals of domesticity are formed. Production, consumption, and their interface have by turns formed the subject of study within design history. Currently, design history is becoming increasingly preoccupied with mediation as a point

on the design continuum providing a focus for studies attentive to both production and consumption. The Design History Society 2001 conference 'Representing Design' provided a taste of the amount and variety of current work on design mediation.²⁵ Advice is situated firmly within the category of mediation, operating as it does between the realms of production and consumption. Advice is an important resource for understanding how ideal models of the consumption of designing goods within the home were mediated to a reading or viewing public. Etiquette and manners guides, and homemaking and home-decorating books (and related treatments in other media such as magazines, television, radio and film) comprise the major categories of advice related to the home.

(Domestic) prescription and (historical) practice

Examination of scholarship that uses advice literature throws up an illuminating variety of approaches to the extent to which advice may be taken as evidence of practice. Advice literature has been found lacking by historians, who are suspicious of the validity of ideals for understanding life *as it was lived*. Advice literature has largely been used as an auxiliary source in studies informed by a blend of data more easily distinguished as primary material such as letters, diaries, probate inventories and so on, implying that advice needs corroboration by reference to other sources. Advice literature, as a form of discourse written for publication, has usually been categorized as secondary rather than primary material. But what of the study of advice itself? Treatment of advice differs widely, just as advice has been put to a wide range of uses in constructing the historical record.

Advice has been used by historians seeking information about the operation of ideology, including, notably, that of national identity. While Norbert Elias's 1939 *History of Manners* focused on Germany and France, and Cas Wouters' ongoing work addresses North American, Dutch, English and German material, in 1946 Harvard Professor of History, Arthur M. Schlesinger, used advice literature (by such luminaries as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Ralph Waldo Emerson) to track the development of particularly North American modes of behaviour

distinct from European habits. Schlesinger made great claims for the importance of the study of manners, concluding that etiquette offers the key to freedom, as national codes of conduct militate against civil war and good manners assist international relations.²⁶ In this special issue, Rachel Rich follows Lisa Tiersten in using advice literature to inform an analysis of the French bourgeoisie. Rich is also concerned, however, with the differences and similarities in British and French dining practices, and consequently her article goes beyond the confines of national boundaries to consider fashionability as functioning through a chain of influence between two neighbouring countries and cultures recorded in advice literature.²⁷

Advice literature has been used to inform understanding of international relations. In developing his theory of a 'civilizing process', Norbert Elias used etiquette literature to show increasing interdependence between individuals and states in Europe over the past four hundred years. Elias stated in his 1939 *History of Manners* that when read historically, etiquette texts allow historians to ascertain the moment at which a particular point of etiquette was adopted by the readership because it is omitted from subsequent texts. Conversely, public resistance to the adoption of certain codes of behaviour was exemplified for Elias by repeated appearance in successive texts. Elias used textual sources in an unproblematic way to extrapolate about lived experience:

If we wish to observe changes in habits, social rules and taboos; then these instructions on correct behaviour, though perhaps worthless as literature, take on a special significance . . . They show precisely what we are seeking—namely, the standard of habits and behaviour to which society at a given time sought to accustom the individual.²⁸

Elias presents his use of advice as indicative of behaviour as a strength of his work, which illuminates the interdependent relation between 'personality structures' and 'social structures'.²⁹ Thus Elias exemplifies the trend criticized by Highmore of studying everyday life only as a way of understanding larger social patterns rather than for its own interest. While his use of advice as charting chronology of manners is not wholly convincing, Elias's study of a corpus of advice literature over several centuries and his interest in comparisons within that corpus is of interest methodologically.

Cas Wouters uses advice literature, albeit from a later period and from four distinct regions, to present a theory of informalization or decivilization counter to Elias's 'civilizing process'.³⁰ Wouters exploits the relative abundance of material available for a shorter and more recent period to examine the dynamic relations between various classes, and between the sexes, across several nations and a period of years. While Elias regarded manners as 'a little the work of everyone', Wouters has dealt concisely with the relationship between prescription and practice: advice comprises 'real ideals'.³¹

Studies that have employed advice in the piecing together of various histories of actual practice invariably contain a more-or-less awkward justification for its use. Historians dealing with behaviour have differed uneasily about how, or for what purposes, to use advice literature as evidence. To illustrate this, I would like to compare a pair of examples dealing with sex advice, because examples of explicit, reflective writing on the use of advice in the field of design history are few. In a 1982 essay, Rosalind Brunt used advice literature to show how sex had been moved 'from the realm of ethical considerations and consigned to the arena of lifestyle and etiquette'.³² Brunt asks herself why she has used advice rather than investigating 'real and actual sexual experience':

With adequate resources, using the methods of interview questionnaire and personal account, it would of course be possible to test the permissively-phrased 'ought' of the advice books with the 'is' of people's own experience. Without those resources, I would not claim that the 'ought' of proposed sexual conduct, however permissively expressed, automatically coincides with the 'is' of sexual practices.³³

Brunt contends that advice books are 'influential as agenda-setters and worth examining seriously as ideological "texts" in their own right.' Bestseller status belies dismissals of the worth of advice literature and 'given the social invisibility of sexual activity in our culture, the manuals' power-to-define will be a particularly forceful and authoritative one.' Brunt's particular claim is for the specific influence of sex advice as a discourse breaking the silence of a repressed aspect of life. Brunt refers to Foucault's discussion of sex as both secret and a discursive obsession in order to exemplify its specificity.³⁴

More than a decade later, in 1995, Roy Porter and

Lesley Hall's *The Facts of Life: The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain, 1650–1950* echoes Brunt. It begins with an emphatic declaration that:

this is not a history of British sex, or sexuality, or of sexual activities and attitudes at large . . . The aim of this book is to survey attempts in Britain, over a three hundred year span, to create a literature and a discipline of sexual information and advice . . . The core of this enterprise lies in writings dedicated to imparting to the public teachings about sex—together with a discussion of their authors, contexts and impacts.³⁵

Like Brunt, Porter and Hall clearly dissociate prescription and practice and insist on the utility of studying the former as a valuable source in its own right. They, too, invoke Foucault as contributing the idea that sex is defined through discourse: 'Sex advice books are thus continually creating and reinventing the object they are purporting to discover, depict and even legislate for.'³⁶ Porter and Hall offer the caveat that a profusion of sex discourse cannot be taken to negate the presence of repression.³⁷ Nevertheless, their careful delineation of the scope of their book does not free Porter and Hall from criticism such as John R. Gillis's warning of the 'mistake in pretending that ideas about sex can be separated from sexual practices'.³⁸

Varieties of advice

Some advice is published anonymously, or by unfamiliar authors, whereas other advice derives from notable authorities. Porter and Hall distinguish between influential and widely published examples of advice, such as Marie Stopes's *Married Love*, and ephemeral examples that are not successively reissued or written by a noted author. The essays in this special issue are similarly discerning. Penny Sparke and Emma Ferry address the work of major figures in their studies, Elsie de Wolfe and the Garrett sisters respectively. Frances Collard refers to a variety of sources mostly produced by figures famous in their day and subsequently featured in the historical record, such as Mrs Haweis and Charles Eastlake. Rachel Rich's article here provides a useful contrast in that it is not concerned with the authorship of the advice texts, but rather with the advice itself. This leads Rich to consult some sources that are far less well known and might be considered ephemeral.

In drawing attention to the existence of different

and indeed contending modes of advice, Porter and Hall describe their own sources as anti-authoritarian and populist: sex advice books are commercially published, written by a heterogeneous group of authors, require readers wishing to purchase and read them to overcome social barriers, challenge medical orthodoxy, and enlighten the public.³⁹ Evidence of the influence of such sources may be found in the readers' letters received by authors and archival material such as that collected by Mass Observation.⁴⁰ Porter and Hall contrast their own sources with others, such as the 'official' childbearing advice ('government propaganda forced on the populace') studied by Jay Mechling. Mechling argues that advice literature is a fictional genre with scant relation to practice that should not be used by historians because it is not followed:

I ask historians to make these manuals the primary sources which they really are rather than the secondary sources which they seem to be . . . A discussion of the childrearing manuals as evidence of manual-writing behavior and values need not ever make the qualitative, inferential leap to talking about the shared child-rearing values in the culture.⁴¹

Porter and Hall conclude that individuals read different sorts of advice differently, and those individuals may have differing interpretations at different times and in different contexts and may even hold contradictory opinions at one time.⁴² We may conclude from the examples offered here that advice addressing different areas of life, and derived from different sources, is read differently and therefore has a distinct relation to lived experience.

Fact and fiction: reading advice

The didactic nature of advice has exercised historians who have attempted to use it as historical evidence. Advice as a genre requires particular sensitivity to authorship, authority, audience and intentionality. Some readers might approach advice not to encounter the particular vision of a novelist, for example, but rather for treatment of a potential, as yet imaginary and un-lived social world that is nevertheless plausible. Other readers might consume advice for its humorous value. Still other readers—historians—may consult advice for information about the past, or (in an important distinction) about ideals promoted in the

past. Having pointed above to some of the problems associated with reading advice and the difficulty of finding direct evidence of actual interpretation of advice by contemporary audiences, it is important to reflect on modes of textual analysis that attempt to determine mode of address and the implied position of the reader.

In his study of *The Court Society*, Elias attributed to his sources a timeless authority and neutrality:

For are the documents, the original sources of information, the substance of history? They are, it appears, the only reliable thing. Everything else that the historian has to offer is, it could be argued, interpretation. These interpretations often differ widely in different generations. They depend on the changing trend of contemporary interests, and the attendant praise and blame of the historians.⁴³

Elias was correct to assert that interpretations of evidence 'differ widely' and are subject to trends, but recognition of this interpretative activity should not be seen to throw the evidence into relief as reliable by comparison with the history written about it. Elias's view of 1969 takes on board some of the influences in historical method sketched at the outset of this introduction but he cannot be said to develop this analysis in a sophisticated way when compared retrospectively with structuralist and post-structuralist methodological positioning.

Hayden White's 1973 study *Metahistory* contends that history writing is creative, fictive even, and that histories may be understood in terms of literary genre as comic, tragic, ironic or romantic.⁴⁴ White also recognized the constructed nature of sources: 'Historical discourse thus features a double representation: of the object of its interest and of the historian's thought about this object.'⁴⁵ The debate has developed from White's structuralist approach into arguments surrounding the relation between history and postmodernism, and history and cultural studies.⁴⁶

Introducing a recent collection of essays, *Medieval Conduct* (2001), editors Kathleen Ashley and Robert L. A. Clark refer to the poststructuralist insights that have called into question 'fixed epistemological assumptions' and to the fact that conduct books are not straightforwardly didactic, but rather 'disrupt the assumed link between text and practice'. Ashley and Clark emphasize the 'labile' nature of advice. The categories into which conduct books may be placed are similarly unclear; conduct books 'breach' liter-

ature and history, confound literary and didactic genres, 'contest the notion that there is one coherent model of gender', and 'obfuscate the distinction between moral improvement and socio-economic mobility'. The reading of such texts is further complicated by the fact that 'the actual consumers of these texts are not necessarily the inscribed or intended readers', and 'among the multiple responses possible in relation to dominant ideologies of conduct there is always the possibility of resistance to or subversion of behavioural scripts.' The work they introduce opens up 'interpretative possibilities—both for the texts' original and present-day reader . . . through various emphases on reception, practice and performance.'⁴⁷ To view advice as a genre of the field of evidence, all of which exists somewhere between fact and fiction and which serves to inform further fictive versions of events called histories, is one way of overcoming the paralysis that can result from consideration of the relationship between prescription and practice. Just as history may be viewed as a kind of fiction, so advice itself is a form of entertainment employing humour to ease its didactic aims. Advice has not always been taken seriously.

An analysis of advice as literary genre has been performed by Jorge Ardití to find out about the infrastructure of social relations. Ardití, too, acknowledges a debt to Foucault, and Bourdieu, in the recognition that discourse embodies and shapes thought and action. Prior to the twentieth century, Ardití suggests, etiquette books took the narrative form of reasoned treatises based around an organizing metaphor—grace—whereas the 'decentred social reality' of twentieth-century North America is embodied in the reference-book format of listing 'rules without principles'.⁴⁸

But what if, instead of seeing etiquette books as mirroring the realities of a very small and obviously not representative minority of a population, we see them, as my discussion of grace suggests, as tools to study the emergence, structure and workings of what we might call the 'cultures of dominance'?⁴⁹

Ardití refers in passing to Elias and Goffman to support his assertion that the utility of advice literature extends only to understanding the dominant classes.⁵⁰ I would contend, however, that in its address to readers, advice literature tells us less about the dominant classes and more about the aspirations of the lower classes, and in

this way it can be used to reassess dominant periodization.

In design history, advice can be used to chart ideals as a corrective to existing chronologies of taste. Domestic design advice has an aspirational readership and by consulting ephemeral sources aimed at a mass, amateur audience, and centred on populist taste, it lags behind that of the avant-garde and the design profession. Considered in this way, analysis of advice can reveal a 'bottom-up' corrective to dominant top-down accounts (for example, of the rhetoric of modernism).⁵¹ How, therefore, are the real and the ideal reconciled in advice literature? By decoding the illustrations of interiors employed by de Wolfe in an individual advice book, Penny Sparke demonstrates how advice literature problematizes authenticity. The complex provenance of objects and interiors in de Wolfe's book, re-presented with no distinction between documentary and fiction, is compounded by the contorted authorship of her text in which ghost-writing and the recycling of articles combine to produce advice books almost wilfully designed to fox the historian's classificatory impulse and concern for determining factual practice.

Advising and advertising

Clearly, the study of advice needs to be framed with an awareness of the fact that instances of advice may not sit comfortably within given genre categories. It is useful to compare discrete advice sources, such as books exclusively devoted to the giving of advice, with magazines that feature advice as part of a mixed diet of articles and advertisements, each occupying some point on the commercial continuum from editorial to advertising. It is evident that there is a great deal of overlap between magazines and discrete sources of advice such as etiquette and homemaking books. There are, however, significant distinctions to be made between advice located in magazines and that found elsewhere. An initial difference between magazines and advice literature is that, unlike the latter, the former has been the subject of extensive academic analysis which continues to grow, as exemplified by the forthcoming *Mediating Design Through Magazines* edited by Jeremy Aynsley.⁵²

Another significant difference might be seen to derive from the fact that magazines are serial and offer

a continuous stream of advice, while discrete advice manuals are characterized by an opposing impulse to be definitive. Jennifer Scanlon notes, in her highly praised 1995 study of *The Ladies Home Journal* from 1910 to 1930, that magazines simultaneously foster anxiety and offer encouraging messages in a recipe that ensures continuing reader loyalty.⁵³ The balancing of satisfaction and continuing need is a necessary quality of serial publication. The line between serial advice and advice that attempts to be definitive is not clear. Advice authors publish successive editions of classic texts just as magazine publishers release anthologies as separate volumes.⁵⁴ No source can be definitive, hence the successive nature of the advice genre. However blurred a distinction between them might be, it is the case that the serial form conditions the advice found therein, not least because the commercial imperative felt by the book publisher may differ from that exercised upon the magazine publisher. For example, the editorial content of magazines is shaped by their dependence on advertising revenue in a way that other forms of advice are not. So, in examining the distinctions to be made between discrete advice sources and magazines, we are led quickly into consideration of the relationship between advising and advertising.

In his controversial 1986 study, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920–1940*, Roland Marchand posits a moment of change in the relationship between advertisements and the offering of advice:

They had always offered advice in a narrow, prescriptive sense: use our product. Now they discovered a market for broader counsel and reassurance. In response, they gave advice that promoted the product while offering expertise and solace in the face of those modern complexities and impersonal judgments that made the individual feel incompetent and insecure. Advertisers, then as now, recognized a much larger stake in reflecting people's needs and anxieties than in depicting their actual circumstances and behavior.⁵⁵

Between 1920 and 1940, therefore, advertisements changed the way in which they offered advice to the viewing public from a straightforwardly didactic model to a more allusive model informed by psychoanalysis. Marchand suggests a corresponding change in academic understanding and use of such sources:

Few students of mass communication now accept the 'hypodermic-needle' theory, which emphasizes the power of media images to inject certain attitudes and ideas into the minds of audience members. But scholars do acknowledge the power of frequently repeated media images and ideas to establish broad frames of reference, define the boundaries of public discussion and determine relevant factors in a situation.⁵⁶

In other words, advertisements are not direct representations of reality but they may influence reality. Like Elias, Marchand views his study of prescription rather than practice as a benefit. For Marchand, advertising reflects imagination rather than mere actuality. Reference to influence is a strategy regularly employed by authors dealing with prescriptive materials as a justification for their methods.

Benjamin Spock's best-selling advice book, *Baby and Child Care*, of 1967 (1946)⁵⁷ provides an exceptionally clear example of the desire on the part of some advice writers wholly to separate themselves from the aims of advertising. Clearly, the medical profession is distinct from others that publish advice, such as interior design, but the fault line between authority and persuasion is common to the advice genre.⁵⁸ The 'Joint Prefatory Statement' outlines the dispute between Spock and his publisher over the inclusion within *Baby and Child Care* of a central 'advertising and record-keeping section':

Dr. Spock has expressed his opposition to the inclusion of advertising of any kind; he feels very strongly that, particularly in a work by a doctor, regardless of any disclaimer, there may be created an impression that he is in some way associated with the products advertised. Dr. Spock is not in any way associated with any commercial products, nor does he endorse any such product, and he wishes to be free of even the slightest implication of any commercial affiliation or endorsement.

The Publisher, on the other hand, has felt that the inclusion of a publisher's advertising section has been of substantial value to every reader . . . The Publisher is conscious of its responsibility to bring to the public the best quality of reading matter at the lowest practicable price; indeed it considers that it is under a duty affirmatively to seek ways and means of achieving that objective.⁵⁹

Fascinatingly, the author of the Prefatory Statement places the dispute within a specific historical moment, not only by making clear the future discontinuation of the contentious 'advertising section', but also by

referring to the medium of mass-market books as relatively new and consequently indistinct:

The last word is yet to be said as to what will ultimately be the format of mass-market books, and in the Publisher's judgment including advertising (as in magazines) will be one important way by which the price of books can be kept low.⁶⁰

In retrospect we can see that the paperback book has achieved its mass market through economies of scale by combining the populism needed for extensive turnover with relatively cheap production costs, and has not needed recourse to advertising. Such debates about the role of advertising in advice would not arise in a volume published more recently. It seems that there is a case to be made for the differentiation of forms of advice found in magazines and other sources based on the extent of the commercial impulse embodied in any given example, and each example needs to be considered as a distinct historically situated case.

While Spock's defence of his role as a neutral, impartial expert adviser may be used as one example of the nebulous distinction between advising and advertising, curator Frances Collard's analysis of historicism, commercial enterprise and public confusion between 1860 and 1890 addresses the confusing variety of decorating solutions offered to consumers as a way of contextualizing the interplay between reproduction and historicism in design, retail and marketing of design in the late nineteenth century. Collard's text tells us much, not only about the period, but also about the caution required in the detective work of the curator towards sources and counterpoints.

Design advice: professionalizing domesticity

Advice writers have been important in presenting domesticity as professionalized and in so doing they have shown homemaking to be as much a form of production as consumption.⁶¹ In establishing the professionalization of home decorating, such authors have also established a professional role for authors of domestic advice. In her study of 'Home Decorating as High Art in Turn-of-the Century Paris', Lisa Tiersten suggests that while home decorating literature pro-

fessionalized the role of the housewife as decorator and ascribed to her aesthetic expertise, thereby solidifying the boundaries between the private and public spheres, bourgeois women simultaneously became 'guardians of aesthetic value' and policed 'the cultural borders of the bourgeoisie'.⁶² In this way, public and private borders were rendered indistinct. Subsequently, Tiersten uncovers the limits of the aesthetic status of female homemakers and the presentation of the woman herself as a decorative object in the same sources. Tiersten uses a blend of home-decorating advice and popular and magazine journalism. As far as it is possible to discern the sex of the authors to whom Tiersten refers, they are overwhelmingly male with a couple of women journalists and an actress being the exceptions. Tiersten's conclusion, that the professionalization of women's domestic production in these sources is ultimately compromised, needs to be tempered by the fact that nowhere does she reflect explicitly on the sex of the authors to whom she makes reference. Jorge Ardití has drawn attention to the fact that 'before the 19th century virtually none of the manuals on behaviour were written by women', whereas from 1880 to the beginning of the twentieth century half of the advice writers were women. Ardití presents this 'emergence of a women's discourse on manners' as 'a chapter, however ambiguous, in the history of women's empowerment'.⁶³ Michael Curtin has shown advice—in the form of the etiquette book—to be a feminine form: 'Powerless in most ways, ladies found in manners a means by which they could assert themselves and create effects in their interest'.⁶⁴

The articles in this collection by Penny Sparke and Emma Ferry are optimistic in their treatment of pioneer figures. Sparke examines one of the earliest professional interior designers, Elsie de Wolfe.⁶⁵ Sparke earlier addressed the professionalization of interior design in an essay she co-authored with Pat Kirkham, which names a number of early women interior designers.⁶⁶ By concentrating on the biography of the author and her work as a real-life interior designer, Sparke has reorganized the 'reality' of the advice literature to which she refers. She focuses on the reality of the production of the text rather than the reality of its consumption. In *The Original Eye: Arbiters of Twentieth-Century Taste* (1984), Philip Core stresses de Wolfe's role as 'a woman doing a man's job' with a professionalism that replaced 'the weapons

of previous arbiters: authority, aristocracy and amateurishness':

Of all our century's arbiters of elegance, Elsie probably left a more definite heritage than any other: no superb collection, no trend-setting discoveries among bohemian artists, no political applications of taste, but rather the whole concept of Taste as a career.⁶⁷

De Wolfe's contribution is several: she contributed to the professionalization of interior design, and the ascription of professional status to women (as designers, and as advice writers), thereby assisting in the establishment of a professional role associated with domesticity—that of the domestic design advice writer.

In common with Sparke, Ferry focuses on the production of advice rather than its consumption. In her article "'Decorators may be compared to doctors': an analysis of Rhoda and Agnes Garrett's *Suggestions for House Decoration* (1876)", Ferry underlines the extent to which the Garrett sisters understood their activity as interior decorators and writers as professional practice. By using techniques of analysis derived from feminist literary theory and history, Ferry demonstrates that apparently conservative sources may be read 'against the grain' and existing accounts of the Garrett sisters and their work have failed to recognize their subversive nature. As early as 1990, Meaghan Morris lamented the fact that 'thousands of versions of the same article about pleasure, resistance, and the politics of consumption are being run off under different names with minor variations'.⁶⁸ Ferry's article makes clear the need for histories of subversive production, which continue to be more imperative today than some of their counterparts concerned with consumption. This special issue contributes to our understanding of the development of the design profession by illuminating the history of the professionalization of domesticity, just as it addresses a moment in which women were stepping fully into the forum offered as authors of domestic advice.

Conclusion

This introduction has plotted an intellectual ancestry of the study of domestic discourse and design advice for understanding the history of design. Like the domestic concerns that are its *raison d'être*, such

advice has had to contend with a lowly position in the academic pecking order based on a patriarchal sense that what occurs in the home is of less import than what occurs in the extra-domestic sphere of work and based in addition on the views of some historians that advice makes for unreliable evidence. As this introduction has indicated, the articles that follow contribute to existing treatments of design mediation by offering pioneering work on how the representations found in domestic design advice can be more than complementary sources: they can be the focus of analysis. In so doing, this special issue offers a range of theoretically underpinned methods for studying domestic discourse and design advice that dissolve some of the implicit boundaries in design and cultural histories, such as those between production and consumption, prescription and practice, fact and fiction, advising and advertising, and professionalism and amateurism.

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Notes

- 1 Treatments of nineteenth-century advice include A. St. George, *The Descent of Manners: Etiquette, Rules and the Victorians*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1993; L. Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society Etiquette and the Season*, Croom Helm, London, 1973; and M. Morgan, 'Puffery prevails: etiquette in 19th-century England', *History Today*, August 1991, pp. 23–30.
- 2 T. Keeble, Review Article: 'Boundaries, walls, thresholds and doors: recent studies into domestic spaces', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 249–55.
- 3 B. Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*, Routledge, London, 2002(a), pp. vii, 25.
- 4 H. Lefebvre, Introduction, *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 1, translated by John Moore, Verso, London, 1991, p. 136 (first published in French as *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, Grasset, Paris, 1947 and published with an additional 100-page foreword in 1985, reflecting Lefebvre's new thinking on the subject). E. H. Carr, *What is History?*, Macmillan, London, 1961, p. 5. Appropriately for a text that explicated the historically specific selectivity of history, the latter was revisited in 2002 with D. Cannadine (ed.), *What is History Now?*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- 5 N. Elias, *The Court Society*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983 (first published in German as *Die hofische Gesellschaft*, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Darmstadt and Neuwied, 1969).
- 6 Highmore, 2002(a) and B. Highmore (ed.), *The Everyday Life Reader*, Routledge, London, 2002(b). See also M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1984.
- 7 H. de Mare, 'Domesticity in dispute: a reconsideration of sources', in I. Cieraad (ed.), *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, New York, pp. 13–30, p. 12.
- 8 The increasingly challenged notion of 'separate spheres' for men and women, with the latter occupying the private sphere of the home and the former enjoying the public sphere of work, has been important in cultural and literary histories of the nineteenth century, and is discussed in the work of L. Davidoff & C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle-Classes 1780–1850*, Routledge, London, 1987.
- 9 K. Millet, *Sexual Politics*, Virago, London, 1977 (Doubleday, New York, 1970 and Hart-Davies, London, 1972), demonstrated patriarchy in action where false consciousness had previously prevented it from being recognized. S. Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It*, Pluto Press, London, 1973.
- 10 Fifteen years after Millet's *Sexual Politics*, J. Todd's *Feminist Literary History: A Defence* provided a retrospective digest of progress in reading 'against the grain' (Polity, Cambridge in association with Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1988). M. Jehlen's 'Archimedes and the paradox of feminist literary criticism', in R. R. Warhol & D. Price Herndl (eds.), *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1991, pp. 75–96, lucidly described the problem of finding a point from which to criticize text, as had D. E. Smith's *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, North Eastern University Press, Boston, Massachusetts, 1987, pp. 105–6, 132–43, and anthologized in Highmore, 2002(b), pp. 271–81.
- 11 C. Clear, *Women of the House: Women's Household Work in Ireland, 1922–1961, Discourses, Experiences, Memories*, Irish Academic Press, Dublin and Portland, Oregon, 2000.
- 12 J. Hollows, 'The bachelor dinner: masculinity, domesticity and food practices in Playboy, 1953–1963', *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2, June 2002, pp. 143–55. See also B. Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-Style in Modern America*, Berg, Oxford, 2001; B. Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1983; J. A. Mangan & J. Walvin, *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800–1940*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1987; and K. Snyder, 'A paradise of bachelors: remodelling domesticity and masculinity in the turn-of-the-century New York bachelor apartment', *Prospects*, vol. 23, 1998, pp. 247–84. A recent useful survey of the study of masculinity is provided by S. M. Whitehead & F. J. Barrett's 'The sociology of masculinity' in their edited volume, *The Masculinities Reader*, Polity, Cambridge, 2001. Other recommended studies of masculinity include R. Chapman & J. Rutherford, *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1988; M. Roper & J. Tosh, *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*, Routledge, London, 1991; F. Mort, *Cultures of Consumption: Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth-century Britain*, Routledge, London, 1996; S. Nixon, *Hard Looks: Masculinities, Spectatorship and Contemporary Consumption*, UCL Press, London, 1996.
- 13 C. Reed (ed.), 'Introduction', *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1996, p. 17.
- 14 I. Cieraad, *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY, 1999, p. 1.
- 15 The Arts and Humanities Research Board funds research in

- Britain The Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior is based at the Royal College of Art in collaboration with the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Bedford Centre for the History of Women at Royal Holloway College, University of London.
- 16 On the historiography of Design History, see F. Hannah & T. Putnam, 'Taking stock in design history', *Block*, no. 3, 1980, reproduced in J. Bird, B. Curtis, M. Marsh, T. Putnam, G. Robertson, S. Stafford & L. Tickner (eds.), *The Block Reader in Visual Culture*, Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 134–47; C. Dilnot, 'The state of design history, Part 1', *Design Issues*, vol. 1, no. 1, Spring 1984, pp. 3–23 and 'The state of design history, Part 2', vol. 1, no. 2, Fall 1984, pp. 3–20, both reproduced in V. Margolin, (ed.), *Design Discourse: History, Theory, Criticism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1989, pp. 213–32, 233–50 respectively; J. L. Meikle, 'American design history: a bibliography of sources and interpretations', *American Studies International*, vol. XXIII, no. 1, April 1985, pp. 2–40; H. Conway (ed.), *Design History: A Students' Handbook*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1987; J. A. Walker, *Design History and the History of Design*, Pluto Press, London, 1989; V. Margolin, 'Design history or design studies: subject matter and methods', *Design Studies*, vol. 13, no. 2, April 1992, pp. 104–16; J. M. Woodham, 'Towards the Millennium: design history from a British perspective', *Oslo Millennium Reader*, Oslo School of Architecture, <http://www.aho.no/ufid/designhistorie/Woodham.pdf>; J. Attfield, *Wild Things. The Maternal Culture of Everyday Life*, Berg, Oxford, 2000.
 - 17 R. Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother. The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*, 1989, Free Association Books, London (Basic Books, New York, 1983). Cowan's ideas were first put forward in a much earlier source, 'The "Industrial Revolution" in the home: household technology and social change in the 20th century', *Technology and Culture*, vol. 17, 1976, pp. 1–24. See also R. Horowitz & A. Mohun (eds.), *His and Hers: Gender, Consumption and Technology*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville and London, 1998 and J. A. McGaw, 'No passive victims, no separate spheres: a feminist perspective on technology's history', in S. H. Cutcliffe & R. C. Post (eds.), *In Context: History and the History of Technology (Essays in Honor of Melvin Kranzberg)*, Lehigh University Press and Associated University Presses, Bethlehem and London, 1989, pp. 172–91.
 - 18 M. Bernold & A. Ellmeier, 'Addressing the public television, consumption and the family in Austria in the 1950s and 1960s', in Mica Nava, Andrew Blake, Iain MacRory & Barry Richards (eds.), *Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption*, Routledge, London, 1997, pp. 191–203.
 - 19 In addition to the sources concerned with masculinity cited above, key texts that foreground gender and/or use feminist theory in the writing of design history sensitive to the production and consumption of design are R. Parker & G. Pollock, 'Crafty women and the hierarchy of the arts', in *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, Pandora, London, 1981, pp. 50–81; P. Goodall, 'Design and gender', *Block*, no. 9, 1983, pp. 50–61, reproduced in Bird *et al.*, pp. 187–208; I. Anscombe, *A Woman's Touch: Women in Design from 1860 to the Present Day*, Virago, London, 1984; C. Buckley, 'Made in patriarchy', *Design Issues*, vol. 3, no. 2, Fall 1986, reproduced in V. Margolin, *op. cit.*, pp. 251–62; L. McQuiston, *Women in Design: A Contemporary View*, Trefoil, London, 1988; J. Attfield, 'FORM/female FOLLOWS FUNCTION/male: feminist critiques of design', in Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 199–225; J. Attfield & P. Kirkham (eds.), *A View from the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design*, Women's Press, London, 1989; J. Seddon & S. Worden, *Women Designing: Redefining Design in Britain Between the Wars*, University of Brighton, Brighton, 1994; P. Sparke, *As Long as Its Pink: the Sexual Politics of Taste*, Pandora, London, 1995; P. Kirkham (ed.), *The Gendered Object*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996; V. De Grazia (ed.) with Ellen Furlough, *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 1996; J. Rothschild (ed.), *Design and Feminism: Re-Visioning Spaces, Places and Everyday Things*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey and London, 1999; P. Kirkham (ed.), *Women Designers in the USA 1900–2000: Diversity and Difference*, Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture/Yale University Press, London and New Haven, 2000.
 - 20 Meikle, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 11. Meikle's work is not mentioned in Walker's bibliography or index, this omission may be explained by Walker's statement, 'Most of the examples cited in this book refer to a London/British context because this is the situation I know best. However, it is assumed that the points made have a general validity.' Walker, *op. cit.*, p. xi, note 1.
 - 21 C. Morley, 'Homemakers and design advice in the post-war period', in C. Newton & T. Putnam (eds.), *Household Choices*, Futures Publications, London, 1990, pp. 89–97; A. Partington, 'The designer housewife in the 1950s', in J. Attfield & P. Kirkham (eds.), *A View from the Interior*, The Women's Press, London, 1989, pp. 206–14.
 - 22 J. M. Woodham, 'The post-war consumer: design propaganda and awareness, 1945–1965', in N. Hamilton (ed.), *From Spitfire to Microchip: Studies in the History of Design from 1945*, The Design Council, London, 1985, pp. 6–11.
 - 23 J. Attfield, 'Design as a practice of modernity: a case study of the coffee table in the mid-century domestic interior', *Journal of Material Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1997, pp. 267–89.
 - 24 M. Segalen, 'The Salon des Arts Ménagers, 1923–1983: a French effort to instil the virtues of home and the norms of good taste', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 267–75 and D. Ryan, *The Ideal Home Through the 20th Century*, Hazar Publishing, London, 1997.
 - 25 The Design History Society Annual conference, 'Representing Design', V&A/RCA Course in the History of Design, Victoria and Albert Museum and Royal College of Art, London, September 2001. Professor Penny Sparke's paper in this volume originates from this conference.
 - 26 A. M. Schlesinger, *Learning How to Behave: A Historical Study of American Etiquette Books*, Macmillan, New York, 1946, pp. 67–70. See also C. Dallett Hemphill, *Bowing to Necessities: A History of Manners in America, 1620–1860*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 1999. By the same author, see 'Middle class rising in revolutionary America: the evidence from manners', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 30, no. 2, Winter 1996, pp. 317–45; 'Age relations and the social order in early New England: the evidence from manners', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 28, no. 2, Winter 1994, pp. 271–95; and 'Class, gender, and the regulation of emotional expression in revolutionary-era conduct literature', in P. N. Stearns & J. Lewis, *An Emotional History of the United States*, New York University Press, 1998, pp. 33–51. Further sources on advice and identity in the USA are S. S. Kissel, 'Frances Trollope's insight into the American identity in *Domestic Manners of the Americans*', *The Midwest*

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- 27 I thank Fiona Hackney of Falmouth School of Art for introducing me to the work of Rachel Rich.
- 28 N. Elias, *The Civilising Process*, vol. 1, *The History of Manners*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994 (1939), p. 67.
- 29 Ibid., p. 184.
- 30 Cas Wouters' ideas have been developed over a series of articles: 'Formalization and informalization: changing tension balances in civilizing processes', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1986, pp. 1–18; 'Developments in the behavioural codes between the sexes: the formalization of informalization in the Netherlands, 1930–1985', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 4, 1987, pp. 405–27; 'The sociology of the emotions and flight attendants: Hochschild's "Managed Heart"', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 6, 1989(a), pp. 95–123; 'Response to Hochschild's reply', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 6, 1989(b), pp. 447–50; 'On status competition and emotion management', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1990(a), pp. 699–718; 'Social stratification and informalization in global perspective', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 7, 1990(b), pp. 69–90; 'Etiquette books and emotion management in the 20th century: Part One: The integration of the social classes', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1995(a), pp. 107–24; 'Etiquette books and emotion management in the 20th century: Part Two: The integration of the sexes', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1995(b), pp. 325–39.
- 31 Elias, op. cit., p. 57; Wouters, 1995(a), pp. 107–24.
- 32 R. Brunt, "'An Immense verbosity": permissive sexual advice in the 1970s', in R. Brunt & C. Rowan (eds.), *Feminism, Culture and Politics*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1982, pp. 143–70, p. 146. See also A. R. Hochschild, 'The commercial spirit of intimate life and the abduction of feminism: signs from women's advice books', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 11, 1994, pp. 1–24. Other sources on marital advice include D. R. Shumway, 'Something old, something new: romance and marital advice in the 1920s', in P. N. Stearns & J. Lewis, *An Emotional History of the United States*, New York University Press, 1998, pp. 305–18 and J. C. Spurlock, 'The problem of modern married love for middle-class women', pp. 318–32 in the same source; M. Gordon, 'From an unfortunate necessity to a cult of mutual orgasm: sex in American marital advice literature 1830–1940', in J. Henslin (ed.), *Studies in the Sociology of Sex*, Appleton Century Crofts, New York, 1971, pp. 53–77 and E. Ross, "'The love crisis": couples advice books of the late 1970s', in C. R. Stimpson & E. Spector Person (eds.), *Women, Sex and Sexuality*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980, pp. 274–87. My thanks are due to Dr Marcus Collins of Emory University for bibliographical guidance regarding the literature of sex advice.
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- 34 Ibid., p. 147 makes reference to M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 *An Introduction*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979. Other advice that breaks the silence of a repressed aspect of life is that surrounding 'menstrual etiquette'. See J.-M. Strange, 'The assault on ignorance: teaching menstrual etiquette in England, c.1920s to 1960s', *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2001, pp. 247–65 and S. Murray, "'Keeping their secret safe": menstrual etiquette in Australia, 1900–1960', *Health*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1998, pp. 62–80.
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- 36 Porter & Hall, op. cit., p. 8.
- 37 Ibid., p. 9. Porter draws here on his earlier exploration of Foucault, for example in 'Is Foucault useful for understanding eighteenth and nineteenth century sexuality?', *Contention*, no. 1, 1991, pp. 61–82 and more recently in the collection he edited with C. Jones, *Reassessing Foucault. Power, Medicine and the Body*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995.
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- 42 Porter & Hall, op. cit., pp. 279–82.
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- 51 D. Patmore, *Modern Furnishing and Decoration*, The Studio, London, 1934 and *Women's Own Book of Modern Homemaking*, George Newnes Ltd., London, 1967 are discussed in G. Lees-Maffei, 'From service to self-service: etiquette writing as design discourse 1920–1970', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 14, no. 3, Autumn 2001, pp. 187–206. For a related discussion of the mixing of modernist and 'other' elements, see P. Kirkham, 'Humanizing modernism: the crafts, "functioning decoration" and the Eameses', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1998, pp. 15–29.
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